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TRAINING OF PERSONNEL FOR HYDRAULIC CONSTRUCTION IN THE USSR

/Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources./

Specialized manpower requirements for the large-scale construction of hydroelectric power stations, canals, and irrigation systems have created an unprecedented demand for hydraulic-engineering personnel. As a result, several large higher educational institutions and numerous tekhnikums of the USSR have completely reorganized or supplemented their educational programs in order to meet the tentative goal of 13,000 trained hydraulic engineers and 28,000-30,000 technicians by the end of 1955.

At the same time, vigorous training programs have been instituted at the projects. Although large numbers of recent graduates from higher, secondary, and trade educational institutions have been sent to the projects, a large proportion of workers is completely unskilled in construction work. Much of the labor employed in the construction of the Main Turkmen and the South Ukrainian and North Crimean Canals has been taken from kolkhozes.

Every effort is made to portray the construction projects as the greatest undertaking ever attempted, engineered and directed by the foremost specialists of the country. However, occasional items of criticism cropping up in the press reveal that the construction projects are having their share of mismanagement and poor organization.

Training of Personnel

According to numerous articles appearing in the Soviet press, the large-scale construction of the Volga-Don, Main Turkmen, South Ukrainian, and North Crimean Canals and the Kyubyshev, Stalingrad, Tsimlyanskaya, and Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Stations has created an increasing demand for personnel specializing in hydraulic-engineering construction. Consequently, according to the press, the Ministry of Higher Education USSR has decided to broaden the training programs

for hydraulic engineers and technicians. The main administrations of poly-technic, construction, and agricultural higher educational institutions, as well as the Main Administration of Educational Institutions of the Ministry of Cotton Growing USSR and the Main Administration of Educational Institutions of the Ministry of Agriculture USSR, have been directed to expand the training programs during the 1951 - 1955 period so as to provide for the training of 13,000 hydraulic engineers and 28,000 (1) (30,000 according to source (2)) hydraulic-engineering technicians.

About 2,400 graduates of tekhnikums will be enrolled between 1951 - 1953 and will be trained in hydraulic specialties under special programs. At the same time, an additional 2,525 students will be recruited and transferred from other related faculties to advanced hydraulic-engineering courses.(1)

A Commission for Cooperation with the Construction of Hydroelectric Power Stations, Canals, and Irrigational Systems has been established by the Ministry of Higher Education USSR and about 80 higher educational institutions are participating in the scientific research work connected with these projects. Students are given an opportunity to participate along with experienced scientists in scientific expeditions to the construction sites.(3) To provide the students with actual working experience, the training program has been extended to the projects themselves. Hundreds of students in advanced hydraulic-engineering courses took part in this program during the summer months prior to July 1951.

The educational program of many higher educational institutions has been either completely reorganized or partially revised by the addition of new departments of hydraulic engineering.(4) Altogether some 50 higher educational institutions in the country are training personnel under this program.(5)

Measures for increasing the number of tekhnikums to train hydraulic technicians have also been taken. During 1951, 14 agricultural tekhnikums will be reorganized into water-resources-development (gidromeliorativnyy) tekhnikums; 18 other tekhnikums will have water-resources-development and hydraulic-engineering departments with a 4-year course of study; in addition, 62 tekhnikums will offer similar training in a 2-year period for graduates of the tenth-grade secondary school.(1) A total of 10,000 persons will be studying in water-resources-development and technological tekhnikums.(6)

The following are some of the higher educational institutions and tekhnikums undertaking the training programs.

Moscow, Leningrad, and Other Areas in RSFSR

The Moscow Construction Engineering Institute imeni V. V. Kuybyshev, one of the largest in the USSR, is training personnel for hydraulic construction work on the Volga, Dnepr, and Amu-Dar'ya rivers.(7) About 68 of its engineering students were sent to the construction projects last summer. Enrollment is double that of the previous year, numbering 500 people, many of whom are on the hydraulic-engineering faculty.

Enrollment has also almost doubled at the former Moscow Water-Resources-Development Institute imeni Vil'yams which has been reorganized into the Institute of Water-Economy Engineers. The new faculty will train engineers in the mechanization of water-resources development.(4) Persons with previous working experience at the construction projects and irrigation canals will be eligible for an engineering degree after 2½ years of further study.(7)

The Moscow Power-Engineering Institute imeni Molotov is scheduled to supply specialists to work on the plans and installations of the hydroelectric

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power stations.(8) The institute is actively participating in the planning and scientific work connected with these projects. Large models of the installations have been made to aid in the scientific research work as well as in the training of personnel. Some of the country's foremost specialists have been called on to revise and direct the educational program.(4) Two new courses have been orgenized: "Base, Foundation, and Stucture" and "Construction of Hydraulic Installations."(9)

The Leningrad Polytechnic Institute is planning to graduate up to 1,000 hydraulic engineers in the next few years. The construction-engineering faculty is enrolling students from other higher educational institutions for its advanced courses in hydraulic-engineering construction and hydroelectric-power installations. The institute is also offering higher engineering training for tekhnikum graduates. The course of study at the institute has been shortened to 5 years.(10)

The Leningrad Peat Tekhnikum will offer accelerated courses in hydraulic engineering construction for students with a tenth-grade secondary education.(11)

The former Kuybyshev Agricultural Institute has been reorganized into the Kuybyshev Institute of Melioration Engineering. Hydraulic, forest improvement, and mechanical engineers will be trained there. The institute will also have a correspondence division.(12) About 300 students have been enrolled in the first course.(13)

The Kuybyshev Construction-Engineering Institute imeni A. I. Mikoyan has also been reorganized and is now called the Kuybyshev Hydraulic-Engineering Institute. Three-hundred students will attend the first course.

An affiliate of the Kuybyshev Industrial Institute has opened an evening tekhnikum at the Kuybyshev Hydroelectric Station construction project. Courses in power, mechanics, and construction engineering are offered.(12) Four-hundred and fifty workers from the project will study there without taking leave from work.(13) In addition, a special evening water-resources-development tekhnikum opened at the Stavropol' construction site of the Kuybyshev Hydroelectric Station. About 250 workers have been enrolled (14) in the 2-year courses (12) of hydraulic engineering and industrial and civil construction taught by highly qualified engineering and technical workers from the Kuybyshev GES construction project. (14)

Saratov State University, one of the largest of the scientific educational institutions in the region of hydroelectric and canal construction on the Volga, is rendering active assistance to the Stalingrad and Volga-Don projects, both in scientific research work and in educational training. A group of technicians for the Volga-Don Canal were trained by the university for inspection and supervisory positions;another group was trained as geological technicians.(15)

The Saratov Automobile and Road Institute will offer special hydraulic-engineering training to graduates of tekhnikums. Beginning with the 1952 - 1953 school year, the institute will open an evening department in hydraulic engineering at the site of the Stalingrad Hydroelectric Power Station.(1)

The Gor'kiy Construction Engineering Institute and the Voronezh and Omsk Agricultural Institutes are also training hydraulic-engineering personnel under special programs.

New water-resources-development tekhnikums will begin operations this year in Stalingrad, Voronezh, Saratov, Chkalov, and other oblasts.(16)

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Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Moldavian SSR

The Kiev Water-Resources-Development Institute revised its educational program to provide specialists in the mechanization of water-resources-development work.(17, 18) More than 400 of its students were assigned to work at the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Station and the South Ukrainian and North Crimean Canals during the summer of 1951.(18)

Many of the 234 graduates of the Kiev Construction-Engineering Institute have departed for Stalingrad, Kuybyshev, and Kakhovka GES.(19)

The Odessa Construction-Engineering Institute has been reorganized into the Odessa Hydraulic-Engineering Institute. Representatives of the institute have visited Stalingrad, Kuybyshev, and Kakhovka GES and the Volga-Don Canal to determine training requirements and to arrange for students' summer assignments. About 200 students have spent the summer at the projects.(20)

Many educational institutions in Khar'kov have been designated as training centers. An Agricultural Institute imeni B. B. Dokuchayev has organized courses for topographers in conjunction with the Khar'kov division of "Ukrvodproyekt" (Organization for the Construction of Ukrainian Waterways). Students are trained in geodesic and hydraulic-engineering construction and are expected to obtain practical working experience at the South Ukrainian Canal.(21)

Groups of students from the Khar'kov Construction-Engineering Institute were scheduled to work in the capacity of assistants to construction superintendents and as technicians and foremen at the Volga-Don and the South Ukrainian and North Crimean Canals during the summer of 1951.(22) A new hydraulic engineering faculty with an expected enrollment of 100 persons has been established.(23)

The Khar'kov Automobile and Road Institute has also assigned its students to the construction works at Kakhovka GES and the Volga-Don Canal.(22)

The Khar'kov Machine-Building Tekhnikum of the Ministry of Heavy Industry is offering special hydraulic-engineering-construction training. All of its graduate technicians and mechanics, as well as specialists in turbine building and pumping, will be employed at the construction projects.(21)

New water-resources-development faculties are being established at the Kherson and Dnepropetrovsk Agricultural Institutes and a hydraulic-construction-engineering faculty is being set up at the Dnepropetrovsk Construction-Engineering Institute.

The Kakhovka and Bekhter Agricultural Tekhnikums (Kherson Oblast) and the Petrov Veterinary Tekhnikum (Odessa Oblast) are being reorganized into hydraulic-engineering tekhnikums. Departments with a 2-year course for the training of specialists in water-resources development are being organized in nine tekhnikums of the republic. Correspondence divisions are being organized in 22 tekhnikums of the Ministry of Agriculture Ukrainian SSR.(18)

The Belorussian Polytechnic Institute is scheduled to train 357 hydraulic engineers and 70 mechanical engineers specializing in hydraulic mechanics within the next 5 years.(24) In 1951, the institute graduated 20 such specialists, who have already become part of the construction personnel.(25) Another 103 will graduate in 1952. In order to guarantee this schedule, the institute will accept 200 people in its second, third, and fourth courses in hydraulic-construction engineering at the beginning of 1951-52 school year (24), 100 of whom will be enrolled in the evening division.(26) In the course of the training program, students in related specialties and in other educational institutions are to be transferred to the institute. Seventy-five persons are expected to be enrolled

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in the first course, 50 of them in the division of hydraulic construction engineering and 25 in the course on mechanization of hydraulic construction. The hydraulic-engineering faculty is being enlarged and equipped with new machinery and laboratories. All students entering the faculty are given scholarships and living quarters in new dormitories. Students in the advanced courses were sent to the projects for 2 months during the summer of 1951.(24)

In the Moldavian SSR, the Tiraspol' Agricultural Tekhnikum will start training specialists in the newly created water-resources-development department, a 2-year course of study. Ninety people are expected to go to the construction projects at the end of that period.(27)

Central Asia

Since the successful completion of the Main Turkmen Canal is expected to promote the economic development of Central Asiatic republics, special emphasis is placed on the training of local personnel in water-resources development and hydraulic-construction work. Commissions for cooperation with the construction of GES, canals, and irrigational systems; designed to aid in the mobilization of all scientific research and education for practical assistance to the construction projects, have been established in Turkmen, Uzbek, and Kirgiz SSR.(28, 29)

The training of personnel with a secondary education is particularly stressed. In Uzbek alone, the tekhnikums will accept 14,500 people in 1951, a number much greater than in previous years.(30) The Uzbek Radio Information Committee is planning a series of special broadcasts about tekhnikums which offer special training programs in hydraulic-engineering specialties as well as other fields important to the national economy.(31)

The Tashkent Engineering Institute of Agricultural Irrigation and Mechanization, the Central Asiatic Polytechnic Institute, and the Central Asiatic State University are the higher educational institutions assigned the task of training hydraulic engineers and technicians in Central Asia.(32, 33)

About 350 persons have enrolled in the advanced courses in hydraulic engineering and technology at the Tashkent Engineering Institute of Agricultural Irrigation and Mechanization as part of the program of transferring students from related fields of study and from other higher educational institutions. About 50 graduates from hydraulic-engineering tekhnikums will be accepted at the newly opened faculty of hydraulic engineering of the institute. The training period lasts only 2 years and 4 months.(34)

The Central Asiatic Polytechnic Institute will also accept students transferred from allied fields or other institutions to its second-, third-, and fourth-year courses in hydraulic-construction engineering.(32, 35)

About 700 students are enrolled in first-year courses at the Central Asiatic State University, which is particularly stressing training programs for the construction projects and other important branches of the national economy in the fields of biology, soil development, geology, and geography.(33)

A group of about 300 students from the Tashkent Engineering and Central Asiatic Polytechnic Institutes have been assigned to the Volga-Don and Main Turkmen Canals for the summer.(36)

A Uzbek newspaper criticized "serious shortcomings" in the proposed training programs.(34) The newspaper complains that most of the institutes are so concerned with organizing and filling the first-year courses that they have neglected to make adequate arrangements for the advanced ones. For example, the paper states that instead of 85 people scheduled for the advanced courses at the Tashkent Institute, there were only three as of 17 August 1951. Only 30 applications

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for accelerated technical courses have been received, and there are about 60 vacancies in the advanced department of hydraulic-construction engineering and technology at the Central Asiatic Polytechnic Institute.(34)

A special tekhnikum catering exclusively to the needs of the Main Turkmen Canal is being set up in Nukus, Uzbek SSR. The 2-year training program will stress the latest methods of hydraulic, civil, industrial, and road-construction engineering, as well as the latest methods of mechanization and technical norm setting. The organization of laboratories, educational combines, and libraries is already in progress. The tekhnikum will be staffed with highly qualified instructors, scientific associates, and experienced engineers--most of them from Tashkent and Askhabad institutes. Only applicants with secondary education will be accepted. After completing the 2-year course at the tekhnikum, the graduate, after the completion of the canal, will be eligible to enter a higher educational institution on the basis of secondary and higher technical education and the actual work experience. It is planned to retain the tekhnikum as a future training center for specialists in water irrigation, waterways, and hydroelectric-power-station construction.(29) Four hundred students have already been selected for the full-term program. In addition, 2,000 machinists and bulldozer, scraper, and excavator operators will be trained there at short-term courses and without leave from work.(37)

Water-resources-development tekhnikums of the Ministry of Water Economy, Turkmen SSR, located in Ashkhabad and Chardzhou, are training specialists in the planning and construction of water-development systems and hydraulic installations such as dams, canals, dredge-pump stations, etc. Graduates of the tekhnikums will have an opportunity to enter engineering and water-resources-development institutes in Moscow, Tashkent, Novocherkassk, and other cities.(38)

Training Programs at Construction Projects

Thousands of people, and entire family groups, are already working at the construction projects. Many more are expected as the work progresses. Living quarters, shops, and schools have been erected for the workers right at the projects.

The following would tend to indicate that a significant part of the labor force is composed of workers with no previous construction experience. For example, a worker writing to friends at the Kirov sugar plant from the Volga-Don project states that the new arrivals who do not have a trade are trained immediately. He states that both he and his wife have new specialties, concrete worker and machine operator.(39) Another item, appearing in Komsomol'skaya Pravda, reports that many of the 69 qualified seamstresses from Leningrad's Trade School No 27 are going to work on the Volga-Don Canal.(40) Numerous other references are made to the construction projects as training centers for qualified construction workers. Kolkhoz workers provide a large share of the manpower for the Turkmen and the South Ukrainian and North Crimean Canals. Many of them are arriving from small settlements and villages in Turkmen, Uzbek, and Kazakh SSR and are trained in handling technical equipment.(41)

Moskovskaya Pravda remarks that people of different professions consider it their duty to make a contribution to the great construction projects. Young workers and kolkhoz workers of Vasil'yevskiy Rayon have put as much as 40,000 man-hours on the construction of the South Ukrainian Canal.(42)

The following gives information on the number of workers and personnel on the training programs at the hydroelectric power stations and canals.

Stalingrad GES

Workers from all over the USSR, many with previous experience on other large rivers, are coming to the Stalingrad Construction Project. The project itself

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is the training center for various construction trades.(43) Hundreds of workers without any previous trade have been trained in the operation of excavator tractors, scrapers, cranes, and bulldozers, and as carpenters, electric welders, bricklayers, plasterers, etc. In the first half of 1951, almost 2,300 qualified workers were trained. (An item in Kommunist mentions only 700 workers trained during the first 6 months of 1951.(41)) About 300 hydraulic-engineering students were working at the project in the summ . 1951.(44)

Kakhovka GES

A number of the sources indicate that many of the new arrivals at the Kakhovka GES are completely unskilled in building trades. According to two of the papers, most of them are assigned as apprentices to qualified workers already there, who are responsible for their training on the job. Hundreds of workers have been trained in this manner as carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, electricians, and mechanization specialists.(45, 46) In June, an educational combine was to be opened on the project which was expected to train 700 people in basic building professions.(46) (Pravda Ukrainy reports that 600 people will be trained in basic building professions (45), while Sovetskaya Kirgiziya states that during 1951, 1,000 qualified construction, installation, and mechanization specialists will be trained at the project (47).)

References are also made to the achievements of the personnel. More than 3,000 workers are said to be exceeding their norms by not less than one and a half times on the average. More than 500 Stakhanovite workers have attained the distinction of "one of the best workers on construction."(45) Many of the thousands of young construction workers--joiners, carpenters, plasterers, and bricklayers--trained at Vitebsk (Belorussian SSR) FZO schools are now enthusiastically working at this project.(48)

Pravda Ukrainy states that attempts are constantly made to improve the skill of the personnel. Hundreds of workers are mastering the latest production methods in Stakhanovite schools and in technical courses. About 300 workers are planning to study in secondary correspondence schools and tekhnikums after working hours. On 15 September 1951 courses preparing for the admission to Odessa Hydraulic-Engineering Institute were to be offered at the project. Foremen, workers, and employees having an eighth-grade education will be admitted.(49)

Volga-Don Construction Project

Builders of the Volga-Don construction project hope to train 16,000 skilled workers.(50) Six thousand workers already have been trained at the Novo-Silenovskiy Settlement (Rostov Oblast) and 5,000 more are expected to be trained in 1951 in the operation of tractors and excavators and as automobile drivers. In addition, the program calls for mass training on the job.(51)

The Canal imemi Moscow is evidently utilized as a training center for personnel destined for the Volga-Don construction project. The first group of graduates from the Leningrad Institute of Water-Transport Engineers and the Moscow Power-Engineering Institute imeni Molotov have been given assignments as acting chiefs of sluices, senior engineers, and as chiefs of hydraulic installations of the canal. After attaining proficiency on the job, the groups will be given similar duties at the hydroelectric power station and the canal on the Volga-Don rivers.(52)

Some of last year's (1950) graduates of the Leningrad school for the training of construction foremen (masterov-desyatnikov) skilled in drilling and road-construction work and the operation and repair of excavators and other construction machinery are now working on the Volga-Don Canal. Many more of the 350 expected graduates will also be assigned there in 1951.(53)

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South Ukrainian and North Crimean Canals

About 150,000 laborers trained in the basic principles of mechanization and 4,000 technicians and engineers are expected to be employed at this project at the height of construction.(54, 55) (A more recent source (56) puts this figure at 200,000.)

In June 1951, more than 3,000 persons, of which 1,000 are engineers and technicians, were working at the project (55, 57) and many more workers, engineers, and technicians are constantly arriving. More than 5,000 letters were received from all over the USSR from people desiring to take part in the construction.(55) To meet the need for more workers, the Council of Ministers USSR ordered the Main Administration of Labor Reserves Ukrainian SSR to recruit 3,000 people. In addition, local organizations are directed to send hundreds of qualified construction workers and technicians to this project.(54) Thousands of kolkhoz workers from Zaporozh'ye are helping in road construction and the procurement of building materials from local sources.(56)

Since the construction equipment often moves over vast territory during the construction process, mobile settlements equipped with living quarters, public baths, laundries, medical centers, retail shops, and electric power stations have been established.

As a result of competition with the workers of the Kakhovka GES, many of the workers are said to be attaining Stakhanovite status. About 3,000 Stakhanovite workers are constantly distinguishing themselves by their highly productive labor. Many Communists and komsomol members are directing the construction brigades. The latest machinery, consisting of powerful electric excavators, automatic cranes, and various types of bulldozers and scrapers, is used in construction.

Shortage of personnel, especially machine operators, is reported by many papers. Plans are being made to step up the training program with the establishment of a special training combine at Zaporozh'ye, at which the first group of 350 excavator operators is being currently trained. Another training combine for construction foremen was expected to be opened at Melitopol' in October 1951, and a third one which will train hydraulic mechanics and topographers will be organized at Kherson.(56) Plans are also being made for the establishment of two industrial schools and one trade school.(54)

Main Turkmen Canal

A large proportion of labor for this project at present is made up of former kolkhoz workers from Turkmen, Uzbek, and Kazakh SSR. All of these workers are completely unskilled, having arrived from small rural settlements. The Main Turkmen Canal construction administration is undertaking to train them through a wide network of short courses. About 1,000 are now being trained as construction foremen and in the operation of bulldozers and excavators.(41)

The town of Takhiya-Tash on the Amu-Darya (Turkmen SSR) is rapidly becoming a large personnel training base. Many technicians and geologists are currently in training and about 200 construction foremen were trained there in the beginning of 1951. Plans for a trade school are also in the making.(37)

As has already been mentioned, a large evening tekhnikum is in the process of organization at Nukus, Uzbek SSR. The tekhnikum is expected to train most of the personnel both in short-term courses and in more advanced hydraulic and other engineering-construction-training programs.(29, 37)

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The construction of the canal is expected to play an important role in the training of manpower for the whole national economy of Central Asia. Russian specialists are currently very active in training Turkmens, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and members of other local nationalities in the latest technology.

An educational program that envisages future large-scale training is now developing at all construction sectors. The first stage of the program includes training of workers who will assure success of the initial foundation work now being conducted. These are the installation technicians and operators who are now faced with the problem of introducing and servicing various operations, repair work, establishment of auxiliary electric power stations, communications, and automobile transport. Consequently, bricklayers, concrete pourers, fitters, electricians, tractor operators, and others of similar trades will in great demand at first. Two thousand workers are already in training for these jobs. In the second stage of training, people will be trained in such fields as machinists, excavators, dredge pump operators, hydraulic excavator operators, and similar professions that will take part in the installation and operation of hydraulic equipment.

The execution of this training program is to be achieved by the method of brigade and individual training in Stakhanovite schools which are now being organized at all construction sectors. At present, such training is not conducted on a sufficiently large scale due to the shortage of qualified workers who could be entrusted to direct such educational brigades. To qualify, the worker must possess at least a seventh-grade education; the worker will be offered the opportunity to become a foreman and eventually enter a tekhnikum. Such workers are expected to play a major role in mass training of construction personnel at the project.

Courses will also be given in servicing construction machines. These courses are to be 3-6 month's duration, with leave from work. Only those with previous experience and good recommendations will be accepted.(29)

Shortcomings in the Work; Personnel Training

The following item from the Soviet press may indicate that the construction projects are having administrative and organizational difficulties. Complaints about poor organization of work and labor crop up amid articles lavishly extolling the construction projects that appear very frequently in the daily press. The following comment, which appeared in Komsomol'skaya Pravda (58), is cited as an example: "Facts show that all is not well at the Volga-Don construction project; the project lacks qualified personnel, equipment is often found idle, and labor is poorly organized. There are many shortcomings in the work of Krasnoarmeyskiy Educational Combine which is training personnel for the project. For example, the operators of C-80 tractors are learning operational methods only through textbooks, as the automobile tractor shop does not have even a single tractor part. The knowledge and experience of the foremost mechanization specialists is not studied, and some of the instructors do not possess adequate education. Although there is a shortage of machine operators, no effort is being made to train them in sufficient numbers."(58)

Criticism of the adminsuration of construction work of the South Ukrainian and North Crimean Canals appeared in Pravda Ukrainy. It cited poor organization of the labor force and violation of technological construction rules; the equipment too was found standing idle, even though it was of the best. The office of technical material supply was found to be working badly and with constant interruptions in the flow of essential materials. The Ministry of Trade USSR was blamed for the lack of retail shops and dining places.(59)

Complaints about delays and shortages have also been made about the Stalingrad construction project. Although the project has developed a large personnel training base, the shortage of experienced construction engineers and hydraulic engineering technicians is very acute.(60)

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